

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to an Office Action dated November 26, 1999 having a shortened statutory period set to expire on February 28, 2000. This amendment corrects several errors of a clerical nature in the specification and modifies certain passages to make the feature descriptions in those passage more clearly consistent with descriptions of the same features in other parts of the application. For example, the Summary of the Invention and the Abstract are amended to agree with FIG. 7(b) and the corresponding text in the specification, which described a variety of different options for notifying a user that a download is complete. The modifications do not introduce any new matter.

This amendment also cancels all of the original claims (i.e., claims 1-27) and enters 3 new independent claims and 18 new dependent claims (i.e., claims 28, 35, and 42, and claims 29-34, 36-41, and 42-48, respectively). The new claims are clarifying in nature, addressing the section 112 rejections. The new claims are not intended to substantially modify the scope or direction of the claimed subject matter. Applicant thanks the examiner for the courtesy of the telephone interview that occurred on February 1, 2000 and believes that this amendment is consistent with the points raised by Applicant during that interview.

Section 112, First Paragraph

Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, 19, and 20 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such way as to enable one skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention. Those rejections, insofar as they might be applied to the new claims, are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action states that Applicant has not shown how a time-consuming link can be distinguished from an immediate link and has not shown how focus can be switched only if the link is a time-consuming link. However, lines 4 and 5 of page 25 of the specification set forth criteria for identifying time-consuming links. Those lines explain that links can be identified as either immediate or time-consuming based on their location (i.e., "local" or "distant"), relative to the local network site.

In addition, lines 1-5 of page 25 explain that profile settings can be used to disable swapping for local links, and block 152 of FIG. 7a illustrates how automatic focus switching can be disabled for any "address in [the] excluded profiles." Thus, the application does teach those of ordinary skill in the art how automatic switching can be made to depend upon whether the profile excludes the address in question, whether that exclusion is based on a specific URL or a URL mask or profile (as shown at reference numeral 232 of FIG7a) or on another profile setting, as described in lines 1-5 of page 25. Applicant therefore respectfully requests reconsideration of the § 112, first paragraph, rejections.

Section 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 2, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, and 22 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. Those rejected claims have been canceled and replaced with claims that point out and claim the invention with greater particularity and distinction, eliminating any question of contradiction or lack of necessary structural connection.

Section 103(a)

Claims 1, 9, and 17 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judson (US 5,737,619) in view

of "Using Windows 95" by Person (hereinafter Person). Those rejections, insofar as they might be applied to the new claims, are respectfully traversed.

Judson discloses a web browser that displays a hidden portion of the current page when the user activates a link to a subsequent page. For example, Judson shows a home page that includes a displayed portion having a hyperlink and a hidden portion consisting of an intermediate message. When the user activates the hyperlink, the displayed portion is replaced with the intermediate message, which is displayed while the page associated with the hyperlink is being downloaded. Importantly, Judson deals with what content will be presented by the browser application, but Judson neither discloses nor suggests switching focus to a different application.

Person teaches that Windows 95® allows users to manually switch from one currently running application to another, either by pressing Alt + Tab or by selecting the other application's button on the task bar.

→ By contrast, as described in claims 28, 35, and 42, the present invention (which operates within a local network site that is simultaneously running "a communications application" and "multi-tasking applications") "automatically switch[es] focus from said communications application to one of said multi-tasking applications" when the hyperlink is activated. Thus, focus could automatically be switched from a web browser to a word processing application, for example. Neither Judson nor Person disclose or suggest such a feature. Judson, in particular, appears to be completely devoid of any suggestion that it might be useful to swap focus away from the browser. The teachings of Person regarding techniques for manually swapping focus thus cannot properly be combined with Judson. As explained in section 2143.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, "the mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render

the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination."

Furthermore, even if Judson and Person were to be combined, the result would still neither disclose nor suggest the present invention. Combined, Judson and Person produce a browser that shows intermediate messages, running under an operating system that allows the user to manually switch focus to different applications by clicking on a button or pressing alt + tab.

The Office Action cites lines 46-51 of column 6 and lines 15-18 of column 7 of Judson in support of the assertion that "it would be obvious that [an] information object could be another application ... because the information object may be supported within the client itself ... and could also be an aural application to play a message." While Judson does explain that the message could be "conveyed to the user aurally" (Col. 6, line 50), Judson does not suggest utilizing any application other than the browser to play that message. Judson also states that "the information object need not be embedded within an existing web page, but rather may be embedded within the home page of the browser or supported elsewhere within the client itself" (Col. 7, lines 15-18). However, explaining that information objects may be supported outside of the browser's home page and outside of an existing web page does not broaden the concept of "information object" to such a degree that one of ordinary skill in the art would consider "information objects" (according to Judson) to be interchangeable with "applications" (according to the present invention). Thus, even if combined, Judson and Person neither disclose nor suggest "automatically switching focus from said communications application to one of said multi-tasking applications," as claimed in each of the independent claims of the present application (i.e., claims 28, 35, and 42).

In addition, claims 28, 35, and 42 each include features that "automatically provid[e] user notification [when] said data has been retrieved," which notification is given "after focus has been switched from said communications application." The Office Action states that user notification is taught in lines 25-28 of column 6 of Judson. In those lines, Judson states that when the download is complete, the routine "opens up access to the hypertext document." However, as mentioned above, in Judson focus never leaves the web browser. Thus, within the context of Judson, simply loading the next web page into the browser might serve as notification. According to the present invention, however, the user is effectively notified even though "focus has been switched from said communications application." For example, as described in the specification, the present invention may provide notification in the form of an audible beep or a message window. Merely loading the next web page into the browser (as suggested by Judson), however, would not constitute notification in the context of the present invention.

Furthermore, claims 29-34, 36-41, and 43-48 include all of the features of independent claims 28, 35, and 42, respectively, and describe additional new and unobvious features of various embodiments of the present invention, such as an application ring that lists preferred applications for receiving focus while access to a remote network site is delayed. For all of the foregoing reasons, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the § 103(a) rejections.

Regarding the requirement in the Office Action for formal drawings, Applicant plans to submit formal drawings upon allowance of the application. Applicant respectfully requests that any further objections to the drawings be held in abeyance until such time as all pending claims are allowed.

Applicant has diligently responded to the Office Action by amending the claims and by pointing out with particularity how the claims as presented

patentably define the invention over the prior art of record. A Notice of Allowance of the claims now pending is therefore respectfully requested.

No fees are believed to be required for this amendment, however, in the event that such fees are required, please charge them to IBM Corporation's Deposit Account No. 09-0465. No extension of time is believed to be required in submitting this response; however, in the event that an extension of time is required, please consider that extension requested and please charge any required fee, as well as any other fees necessary to further the prosecution of this application, to IBM Corporation's Deposit Account No. 09-0465.

Respectfully submitted,



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